DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 458 953 PS 029 905

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TITLE Placed and Paid For: Supporting Families through Sponsored Day Care. Studies in Evaluating the Children Act 1989.
ISBN ISBN-0-11-322529-6
PUB DATE 2001-00-00
NOTE 139p.; Based on a study funded by the Great Britain Department of Health.
AVAILABLE FROM Stationery Office, Publications Centre, P.O. Box 276, London SW8 5DT, England (17.50 British Pounds Sterling). Tel: 0870-600-5522; Fax: 0870-600-5533; e-mail: book.orders@theso.co.uk; Web site: http://www.clicktso.com.
PUB TYPE Books (010) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Caregiver Attitudes; Child Caregivers; Client Characteristics (Human Services); *Day Care; Definitions; Delivery Systems; Early Childhood Education; *Family Needs; Family Programs; Foreign Countries; Low Income Groups; Parent Attitudes; Program Effectiveness; *Program Evaluation; Public Policy; *Young Children
IDENTIFIERS *Child Care Needs; Children Act 1989 (Great Britain); Day Care Quality; Program Characteristics; *Subsidized Child Care Services; United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

A central component of the Children Act 1989 in Great Britain is sponsored care, the purchase by local authorities of places for individual children in voluntary and private day care facilities. The book details a study examining how private and voluntary day care services such as childminders, preschools, and day nurseries are used by local authorities to support children in need. A variety of data collection techniques was employed, including surveys, interviews, analysis of statistics, observation, and case studies of individual families. Chapter 1 presents information on the Children Act 1989, the role of family support services, and the current policy context for the study. Chapter 2 describes the methodology, data analysis, and data interpretation techniques. Chapter 3 considers the extent of sponsored day care, the characteristics of those who receive it, and the characteristics of the service they are offered. These data are used to examine the concept of "need" and to explore how definitions of need are applied in practice. Chapter 4 presents information on ways of organizing and delivering sponsored day care services and considers issues of training and support for independent day care providers working with children in need. Chapter 5 describes day care providers' views of the services they offer and the advantages and difficulties of working in partnership with local authorities. Chapter 6 presents parents' views, both participating parents and those who declined to participate when their child was offered a space. Chapter 7 examines program outcomes for families, service outcomes, and process outcomes such as quality of care. Chapter 8 summarizes the main findings and considers key issues for policy and practice. Two appendices include the Family Day Care Rating Scale and a list of the publications from the sponsored day care project. (Contains 66 references.) (KB)

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